Steps for Fluoride Varnish Application

1. **You will need:**
   - Gauze sponges (2x2)
   - Unit doses of fluoride varnish
   - Disposable dental mouth mirrors
   - Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to include at a minimum: a face mask, eye protection to include goggles or protective eyewear with solid side shields, a surgical mask, and gloves. Visit the CDC [website](https://www.cdc.gov) for up-to-date recommendations.
   - Finger splint (optional)

2. **Position the child using the following options:**
   - Place the child on the parent’s lap with their legs around the parent’s waist. Position yourself knee-to-knee with the parent with the child’s head on the parent’s knees or your lap so that you can apply the varnish from above the head.
   - Place the child on an exam table and work from above the head.
   - Adapt a method that works for you.

3. **Apply the varnish:**
   - Using finger pressure, open the child’s mouth. If the child is crying, this is normal and can make it easier to apply the varnish.
   - Dry the teeth with a gauze sponge. **The teeth must be dry.**
   - Use your fingers and a gauze sponge to dry the teeth. You will usually be able to dry a quadrant of teeth at a time but will have fewer teeth to work with in younger children.
   - Apply a thin layer of the varnish to all surfaces of the teeth.
   - Once the varnish is applied, you need not worry about moisture (saliva) contamination.
   - Repeat the varnish application every three to six months, most successfully done at well-child visits.

4. **Provide instructions to the caregiver to ensure a successful fluoride varnish application:**
   - Have the child eat a soft, non-abrasive diet for the rest of the day.
   - Wait until the next day to brush the child’s teeth.
   - The teeth will not be white and shiny until the varnish is brushed off.
   - Counsel the parent on brushing the child’s teeth with a smear of fluoride toothpaste twice a day.